

THE

HISTORY

OF

ADAM BELL,

CLIM OF THE CLOUGH,

AND

WILLIAM OF CLOUDESLY.

Who were three Archers good enough,
The best in the North Country.



GLASGOW,

by ROBERT SANDERS, P
the Town, and are to be sold in

M. DC. LXVIII



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Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough,
and William of Cloudestie.

MERKE it was in the green Forest
amongst the leaves green,
Whereas men hunt east and west,
with bows and arrows keen,
To raise the Deer out of their den,
such sights have not been seen:
As by three peomen of the North Country,
by them it is I mean.
The one of them beght Adam Bell,
another Clim of the Clough,
The third was William of Cloudestie,
an Archer good enough.
They were out-lawed for Wenison,
these peomen every one:
They swore them brethren on a day,
to English wood for to gang.
Now lyth and listen Gentlemen,
that of mirth loves to hear:
Two of them were single men;
the third had wedded free.
William was the wedded man,
much more then was his care.
He said to his brethren on a day,
to Carlile he would fare,
there to speak with fair Alice his wife,
and with his childzen three.

4 Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough,
By my truth, said Adam Bell,
not by the counsel of me :
For if ye go to Carlile, brother,
and from this wild wood wend.
If that the Justice do you take,
your life is at an end.
If that I come not to morrow, brother,
by prime to you again,
Trust you then that I am taken,
or else that I am slain.
He took his leaue of his brethren two,
and to Carlile he is gone :
There he knocked at his own window,
shortly and anone.
Where be you, faire Alice, he said,
my wife and children three ?
Lightly let in thine own husband,
William of Cloudestie.
Alace, then said fair Alice,
and sighed very soze,
This place hath been beset for you,
full half a year and moze.
Now I am here, said Cloudestie,
I would that I in were :
Now fetch us meat and drink enough,
and let us make good chear.
She fetcht him meat and drink plenty,
like a true wedded wife :
And pleased him with what she had,
whom she lov'd as her life.
There lay an old wife in that place,

and William of Cloudestie.

a little before the fire.

Which William had found of charity,
more then seven year.

Up she rose, and forth she goes,
evil might she speed therefore:
For she had set no foot on ground,
in seven years before.

She went unto the Justice Hall,
as fast as she could by:

This night, she said, is come to the Town
William of Cloudestie.

Thereat the Justice was full fain,
and so the Sheriff also.

Thou shalt not travel hither for nought,
thy meed thou shalt have ere thou go.

They gave to her a right good gown,
of scarlet it was, I heard sain.

She took the gift, and home she went,
and couched her down again.

They raised the Town of merry Carlisle,
in all the haste they can:

And thronging fast into the house,
as fast as they might gang.

There they beset the good yeoman
about on every side.

William heard great noise of the folk
that thitherward fast by'd.

Alice opened a back window,
and looked all about:

She was ware of the Justice and Sheriff,
and with that a great rout.

6 Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough,
Alace, treason, then cry'd Alice,
ever wo may thou be :
Go into my chamber, husband, she said,
Sweet William of Cloudestie.
He took his sword and his buckler,
his bow, and childzen three,
And went into the strongest chamber,
where he thought surest to be.
Fair Alice like a lover true,
with a Pollax in her hand,
Said: He shal die that cometh in
this doo, while I may stand.
Cloudestie bent a right good bow
that was of a trusty tree,
He smote the Justice on the breast,
that is arrow bust in thee.
Gods curse of his heart, said William,
this day thy coat put on;
If it had been no better no, mine,
it had been near the bone.
Weld thee, Cloudestie, said the Justice,
and thy bow and thine arrows thee fro.
Gods curse on his heart, said fair Alice,
that my husband counselletb so.
Set fire on the house, said the Sheriff,
sith no better it will be :
And burn we therein, William, he said,
his wife and childzen thee.
They fired the house in many a place,
the fire flew on hie.
Alace, then said fair Alice,

and William of Cloudeflie.

I see we here shal die.

William opened a back window
that was in his chamber hie,
And there with sheets he did let down
his wife and children thre :

For Christs love do them no harm,
but wreak you all on me.

William shot so wondrous well,
till his arrows were all gone ;
And fire so fast about him fell,
that his bow-string burnt in twain.
The sparkles burnt and fell upon
good William of Cloudeflie.

But then was he a woful man,
& said : This is a cowards death to me.
Kather had I, said William,
with my sword in the rout to run,
Then here amongst mine enemies wood,
so cruelly to burn.

He took his sword and buckler then,
amongst them all he ran :
Where the people thickest were,
he smote down many a man.
There might no man abide his strokes,
so fiercely on them he ran.
Then they threw windows & doers on him,
and so took that yeoman.

There they him bound hand and foot,
and in a deep dungeon him cast.
Now, Cloudeflie, then said the Justice,
thou shalt be hanged in haste.

8 Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough,
One bow shal I make, said the Sheriff,
a pair of new gallows thou shalt have,
And all the gates of Carlisle shalt thou shut :
there shal no man come in thereat.
There shal not help Clim of the Clough,
nor yet Adam Bell,
Though they came with a thousand mo,
nor all the devils in hell.
Early next morning the Justice arose,
to the gates fast can he gone,
And commanded to shut close
lightly every one.
Then went to the Market place,
as fast as they can hie :
A pair of new gallows there he did set up
beside the Dilatorie.
A little Boy stood them amongst,
and askt, what meant the gallows tre :
They said, To hang a good yeoman,
called William of Cloudeslie.
That little Boy was Town swine-herd,
and kept fair Alice swine :
Full oft he had seen Cloudeslie in the wood,
and gave him there to dine.
He went out of a crevice of the wall,
and lightly to the wood he ran :
There he met with these wight yeomen,
shortly and anone.
Alace, then said the little Boy,
you tarry here all too long :
Cloudeslie's tane and doom'd to death,
and ready to be hang'd. Alace

and William of Cloudeslie.

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Alace, then said good Adam Bell,
that eber we saw this day :

He might haue tarri'd here with us,
so oft we did him pray.

He might haue staid in the Forest,
under the shadows shene,

And kept both him and us at rest,
out of trouble and teen.

Adam bent a right good bow,
a great Hart soon he had slain :

Take that, child, he said, to thy tinner,
and bring me mine arrow again.

Now we go hence, said the folp yeomen,
tarry we no longer here :

We shal him borrow, by Gods grace,
though we buy it full dear.

To Carlile went these good yeomen,
in a merry morning of May.

Here is a fit of Cloudeslie,
and another for to say.

And when they came to merry Carlile,
in a fair morning tide,

They found the gates shut them unto,
round about on ebery side.

Alace, then said good Adam Bell,
that eber we were made men :

These gates are shut so wondrous well,
that we may not come therein.

Then spake Clim of the Clough,
with a wyle we will us in bying :

Let

10 Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough,
Let us say, we be messengers
straight come from the King.
Adam said, I have a Letter,
well, let us wisely work :
We will say, we have the Kings seal,
I hold the Porter no Clark.
Then Adam Bell beat at the gate,
with strokes great and strong.
The Porter heard such a noise therat,
and to the gates he throng.
Who is there, said the Porter,
that maketh all this knocking ?
We be two Messengers, said they then,
be come right from the King :
We have a Letter, said Adam Bell,
to the Justice we must it bring :
Let us in our Message to do,
that we were again to the King.
Here cometh none in, said the Porter,
by him that died on tree,
Till that a false thief be hanged,
call'd William of Cloudeflie.
Then spake Clim of the Clough,
and swoze by Mary free :
If that we stand long without,
like a thief hang'd shalt thou be.
Lo, here we have the Kings Seal :
what, Lurden, art thou wood ?
The Porter ween'd it had been so,
and lightly did off his hood :
Welcom is my Lords seal, he said,

and William of Cloudestlie.

for that ye shal come in.

He opened the gates full shortly :
an evil opening for him.

Now are we in, said Adam Bell,
whereof we are right fain :

But Christ he knows assuredly,
how we shal out again.

Had we the keyes, said Clim of the Clough,
right well then should wee speed :

Then might we come out well enough,
when we see time and need.

They called the Porter to counsel,
and wryng his neck in two,

And cast him in a deep dungeon,
and took the keyes him fro.

Now I am Porter, said Adam Bell,
see, brother, the keyes we have here.

The worst Porter in merry Carlile,
that came this hundred year.

Now we will our bows bend,
into the Town we will go,

For to deliver our dear brother,
that lyeth in care and wo.

Then they bent their good yew bows,
and looked their strings were round;

The Market place of merry Carlile
they beset in that stound.

And as they looked them beside,
a pair of gallows there they see,

And the Justice with a Quest of Squires,
that judged William hanged to be.

And

112 Adam Bell Clim of the Clough,
And Cloudeffie lay ready in a cart,
fast bound both foot and hand :
And a strong rope about his neck,
already for to hang.
The Justice call'd to him a lad,
Cloudeffies cloathes he should have,
To take the measure of that yeoman,
and thereby to make him a grave.
I have seen as great marbel, said Cloude,
as between this and prime, (sic)
He that maketh a grave for me,
himself may ly therein.
Thou speakest proudly, said the Justice,
I will thee hang with my hand.
Full well heard this his brethren two,
there still as they did stand.
Then William cast his eye aside,
and saw his two brethren
At the corner of the Market, wel prepared
ready the Justice to chase.
I see comfort, said Cloudeffie,
yet hope I well to fare :
If I might have my hands let free,
right little might I care.
Then spake good Adam Bell
to Clim of the Clough so free :
Brother, see you mark the Justice well,
lo, ponder you may him see.
At the Sheriff shoot I will
strongly with an arrow keen :
A better shot in merry Carlile,

and William of Cloudeſlie.

13

this ſeven years was not ſeen.

They looſed their arrows both at once,
of no man they had dread:

The one hit the Juſtice, the other the Sher-
that both their ſides gan bleed. (riſt)

All men bolded that ſtood them nigh,
when the Juſtice fell to the ground:

And the Sheriſſ niſ him by,
either had his deaths wound.

All the Citizens gan to ſlie,
they durſt no longer abide.

There lightly they looſ'd Cloudeſlie,
where he with ropes lay ty'd.

William ſtept to an Officer of the Town,
his arc out of his hand he wung:

On each ſide he ſmote them down,
him thought he tarried all too long.

William ſaid to his brethren two,
this day let us live and die:

Ne ever you have need, as I have now,
the ſame ſhal you find by me.

They ſhot ſo well that tide,
for their ſtrings were of ſilk ſure,

That they kept the ſtreets on every ſide:
the battel did long endure.

They fought together like brethren true,
like hardy men and bold.

Many a man to the ground they threw,
and made many a heart cold.

But when their arrows were all gone,
men preſſed on them full faſt;

The

14 Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough,

They drew their swords then anone,
and their bows from them cast,

They went lightly on their way,
with swords and bucklers round :

By that it was mid of the day,
they made many a wound.

Many an out-bozn in Carlile was blown,
and the bells backward did ring :

Many a woman said, Alace :
and many their hands did wring.

The Masoz of Carlile forth come was,
and with him a full great rout :

These yeomen dread him full soze,
for of their liues they were in great doubt

The Masoz came armed a full great pace,
with a pollax in his hand :

Many a strong man with him was
within the stance to stand.

The Masoz smot at Cloudeslie with his bil,
his buckler burst in two :

Full many a yeoman with great evil,
alace, treason they cry'd for wo :

Keep we the gates fast, they bade,
that these traytors there out not go.

But al for nought was that they wrought,
for so fast down they were laid;

Til they all thzee that so manfully fought,
were gotten out of bzaid.

Have here your keyes, said Adam Bell,
mine office here I forsake,

If you do by my counsel,

and William of Cloudeslie.

15

a new Porter do you make.

They threwe the keyes at their heads,

and bade them evil to thaire :

And all that letteth any good peoman
to come and comfort his wife.

Thus be these peomen gone to the wood,
as light as leaf on tree, :

They laught & were merry in their mood,
their enemies were far fra.

When they came to the English wood,
under the trusty tree,

There they found bows full good,
and arrows great plenty.

So God me help, said Adam Bell,

and Clim of the Clough so free,

I would we were in merry Carlile,
befoze that fair meinzie.

Then sate they down and made good chear
and ate and drunk full well.

Here is a fit of these bold peomen,
another I shal you tell.

As they sate in English wood,
under the trusty tree,

They thought they heard a woman weep,
but her they could not see.

Soe then sighed fair Alice,

that eber I saw this day :

For now is my dear husband slain,
alace, and well away.

Night I have spoke with his dear brethren
of either of the twain,

To

16 Adam Bell; Clim of the Clough,
To show to them what him befel,
my heart were out of pain.

Cloudeſſie walkt a little aſſide,
and tokt under the green-wood lind,
He ſaw his wiſe and children thre,
full wo in heart and mind.

Welcome, wiſe, then ſaid William,
under this truſſy tree :

I had ween'd yeſterday, by ſweet S. John,
thou ſhouldeſt me never ſee.

Now well is me, ſhe ſayes, that ye be here,
my heart is out of wo.

Dame, he ſayes, be merry and glad,
and thank my brethren two.

Hereof to ſpeak, ſaid Adam Bell,
I wiſe it is no boot :

The meat that we muſt ſup withall,
it reſteth yet faſt on foot.

1 Then went they down into the land,
theſe noble men all thre :

2 Each of them ſlew an Hart of grace,
the beſt they could there ſee.

3 I Have here the beſt, Alice, my wiſe,
ſaid William of Cloudeſſie;

4 Because ye ſo boldly ſtood by me,
when I was ſlain full nie,

5 Then they went to ſupper,
with ſuch meat as they had;

6 And thanked God for their fortune,
they merry were and glad.

7 And when that they had ſupped well,
certain without any leaſe,

Clou

and William of Cloudestlie.

27

Cloudestlie said: We will to our King,
to get us a charter of peace.

Alice shal be at our sojournung,

in a Punnery here beside;

By two sons shal with her ge,

and there they shal abide.

My eldest son shal go with me,

for him I have no care;

And he shal bring you word again

how that we do all fare.

Thus be these peomen to London gone,

as fast as they may hie,

Uill they came to the Kings Palace,

where they would needs be.

And when they came to the Kings Court,

unto the Palace gate,

Of no man would they ask leaue,

but boldly went in therat.

They proceeded present into the Hall,

of no man they had dread.

The Porter came after, and did them call,

and with them gan to chide.

The Wsher said: Peomen, what would ye

I pray you tell to me:

(have ye

you might have Officers sent.

Good Sirs, from whence be ye?

Er, we be out-laws of the Forest,

certain without any lease,

And hither we be come to the King,

to get us a Charter of peace.

And when they came before the King,

16 Adam Bell; Clim of the Clough,
To show to them what him befel,
my heart were out of pain.

Cloudeſlie walkt a little aſide,
and lookt under the green-wood lind,
He ſaw his wiſe and children thre,
full too in heart and mind.

Welcome, wiſe, then ſaid William,
under this truſty tree :

I had ween'd yeſterday, by ſweet S. John,
thou ſhouldeſt me never ſee.

How well is me, ſhe ſayes, that ye be here,
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And thanked God for their fortune,
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My two sons shal with her go,

and there they shal abide.

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Or, we be out-laws of the Forest,
certain without any lease,

no hither we be come to the King,
to get us a Charter of peace.

And when they came before the King,

18 Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough,
it was the Law of the Land :
They kneeled down without letting,
and each held up his hand.
They said : Lord, we beseech thee here,
that ye would grant us grace :
For we have slain your fat fallow Deer,
in many a sundry place.
What be your names, then said the King,
anone that you tell me;
Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough,
and William of Cloudestie.
Be ye these thiebes, said the King,
that men have told to me;
Here to you I make a vow,
ye shal be hang'd all three.
Ye shal be dead without mercy,
as I am King of the land.
He commanded his officers every one,
fast on them to lay hand :
Therefore they took these good yeomen,
and arrested them all three.
So may I thrive, said Adam Bell,
this game liketh not me.
But, good Lord, we beseech you now,
that ye will grant us grace.
In so much as we do to you come,
or else that we may from you pass,
With such weapons as we have here,
till we be out of your place :
And if we live this hundred years,
we will ask of you no grace.
Ye speak proudly, said the King,

ye shal be hanged all thzee.

That were great pity, said the Queen,
if any grace might be.

My Lord, when I came first into this land
to be your wedded wife,

The first boon that I should ask,
you would grant me belibe :

And I asked neber none till now.

therefoze, good Lord, grant it me.

Now ask it, Madam, said the King,
and granted it shal be.

Then, good Lord, I you bescech,
these peomen grant you me.

Madam, ye might haue asked a boon
that should haue been worth all thzee.

Ye might haue asked towers and towns,
Parks and Forests plenty.

None so pleasant to my pay, she said,
noz none so leas to me.

Madam, sitb it is your desire,
your asking granted shal be :

But I had rather haue giben you
good Market towns thzee.

The Queen was a glad woman,
and said : Lord, gramercy :

I dare undertake for them,
that true men they shal be.

But, good Lord, speak some mercy word
that these may comfort see.

I grant you grace, then said the King,
wash, fellows, and to meat go ye.

Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough,
They had not sitten but a while,
certain without leasing,

There came two Messengers out of the North
with letters to the King. (North)

And when they came before the King,
they kneeled down upon their knee,
And said; Your Officers greet you well
of Carlile in the North Countrie.

How fareth my Justice, said the King,
and my Sheriff also?

Sir, They be slain without leasing,
and many Officers mo.

Who hath them slain? said the King,
anone that you tell me.

Adam Bell Clim of the Clough,
and William of Cloudestie.

Alace, for truth, then said the King,
my heart is wondrous sore;

I had lever then a thousand pound,
I had known this before:

For I have granted them grace,
and that forthinketh me:

But had I known all this before,
they had been hang'd all three.

The King opened the Letter anone,
himself he read it tho.

And there he found how these outlaws had
three hundred men and mo. (slain)

First the Justice, and the Sheriff,
and the Mayor of Carlile town;

Of all the Constables and Catchpoles,
albe they left not one.

The

The Bailiffs and the Beadels both,
and the Sergeants of the Law:
And forty Foresters of the fee,
these out-laws have yllaw.
And broke his Parks and slain his Deer,
of all they chose the best:
So perillous out-laws as they were,
walked not by East nor West.
When the King this Letter had read,
in heart he sighed full sore:
Take up the table, then said he,
for I can eat no more.
The King then called his best Archers,
to the butts with him to go:
I will see these fellows shoot, said he,
that in the North hath wrought this wo.
The Kings bow-men busht them blith,
and the Queens Archers also:
So did these wight yeomen,
with them they thought to go.
There twice or thrice they shot about,
for to assay their hand:
There was no shot these reomen shot,
that any prick might stand.
Then spake William of Cloudestie,
by him that for me died,
Hold him never a good Archer,
that shooteth at butts so wide.
Whereat then said the King,
I pray thee, tell to me,
If such a but, Sir, he said,

Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough,
as men use in Countrie.

William went into the field,
and his two brethren with him :

There they set up two basel rods,
twenty score pace between :

I hold him an Archer, said Cloudeſlie,
that yonder wand clea beth in two.

Here is none ſuch, ſaid the King,
for no man can do ſo.

I ſhal aſſay, Sir, ſaid Cloudeſlie,
ere that I further go.

Cloudeſlie with a bearing arrow
clabe the wand in two.

Thou art the beſt Archer, ſaid the King,
forſooth that euer I did ſee.

And yet for your love, ſaid William,
I will do more maſtery :

I have a ſon of ſeven years old,
he is to me full dear :

I will ty him to a ſtake,
all ſhal ſee him that be here,

And lay an apple upon his head.
and go ſix ſcore pace him fro,

And I my ſelf with a broad arrow
ſhal cleave the apple in two.

Now haſte thee then, ſaid the King,
by him that died on tree :

But if thou doſt not as thou haſt ſaid,
hanged ſhalt thou be :

And if thou touch his head or gown,
in ſight that men may ſee,

By all the Saints that are in heauen,
I ſhal you hang all thre.

That I haue promiſed, ſaid William,
I neuer will forſake.

And there euen befoze the King,
in the earth he dꝛobe a ſtake,

And bound thereto his eldeſt ſon,
and bade him ſtand ſtill thereat,

And turn'd the child's face him fro,
becauſe he ſhould not ſtarr.

An apple upon his head he ſet
and then his bow he bent:

His ſcore pace there were met,
and thither Cloudeſſie went.

There he dꝛew out a fair broad arrow,
his bow was great and long:

He ſet that arrow in his bow,
that was both ſtiff and ſtrong.

He prayed the people that were there,
that they would ſtill ſtand:

For he that ſhooteth for ſuch a wager,
had need of a ſtudy hand:

Much people prayed for Cloudeſſie,
that his life ſaued might be:

And when he made him ready to ſhoot,
there was many a weeping eye.

Then Cloudeſſie clabe the apple in two,
as many a man might ſee.

Now God forbid, then ſaid the King,
that thou ſhouldeſt ſhoot at me.

I giue thee eightreen pence a day,
and my bow ſhalt thou bear;

And

And oer all the North Countrey,
I make thee chief Rider.

And I'll geve thee thirteene pence a day
by God, & by my say: (said the Queen)
Come fetch thy payment when thou wilt
no man shal say thee nay.

William, I make thee a Gentle-man,
of cloathing and of fee:

And thy two brethren yeomen of my
for they are lobely to see. (chamber)

Your son, for he is tender of age,
of my wine-seller shal be:

And when he comes to mans estate,
better preferred shal he be.

And, William, bring me your wife, said the
I long full sore to see: (Queen)

She shal be my chief Gentle-woman,
to govern my Purserie.

The yeoman thanked them ful curteously
and said, to some Wethop we will wend,

Of all the stas that we have done,
to be asoyled at his hand.

So forth be gone these good yeomen,
as fast as they can be,

And after came and liued with the King,
and died good yeomen all thre.

Thus ended the liues of these good yeomen
God send them eternal blis:

And all that with hand-bow shooteth,
that of heauen may never miss,